‘EXPLORATION OF SELF’ : A STUDY OF GLORIA NAYLOR AND MANJU KAPUR

SYNOPSIS

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1. **Title**: **'EXPLORATION OF SELF' : A STUDY OF GLORIA NAYLOR AND MANJU KAPUR**

Introduction: Gloria Naylor and Manju Kapur are women writers who have caught people's attention through their writings for raising powerful feminist voices during the time when scientific progress and technological advancement was at great speed. After the post-colonial period, a major change was witnessed with respect to the ideology of women who raised their voices to create a space for themselves both inner and outer. In Indian context, the educated woman was coming on the fore-front breaking the patriarchy while in American context the Harlem Renaissance opened new vistas for the women to make their stands. Being an Afro American Gloria Naylor tried to voice the problems of black women who were facing triple Jeopardy. How they reacted against their treatment as slaves, racial discrimination and sex objects. The impact of education could be seen on the protagonists. Their thrust to explore their selves to move on the path of spiritual redemption, to glorify their black culture and religion through which they can restore their peace of mind. They denied to accept the white supremacy and hold on to their roots. During 1970s **lesbian feminism** has emerged with a concern that heterosexism was considered responsible for woman's oppression. Liberal feminism seeks out ***equal natural rights for women.*** It longs for political rights. At present, women try to **deconstruct** all the **established canons** of the society which impose male on her. In the **'Second Sex' Simone de Beauvoir** shows that new woman aims: to be active, a taker, and rejects the passivity man means to impose on her. The **'modern' woman** accepts masculine values. She prides herself on thinking, taking action, working, creating, on the same terms as men; instead of seeking to disparage them, she declares herself their **equal.** She is ready to break the walls, raised on the pretext of female subjugation or racial discrimination and who curtail freedom of expression in one form or the other in the periphery of highly patriarchal social construct. The civil rights movement that took place in the 20th century changed the perception of the Black woman by their active participation not only voicing for their equality in the political but also in literary field. In the "second wave" of the women's rights movement,

barriers fell, in making cultural contributions to American society with the writings of a few notable woman writers.

The assertion of black pride by members of the Negritude movement was attended by a cry against assimilation. They felt that although it was theoretically based on a belief in universal equality, it still assumed the superiority of European culture and civilization over that of Africa (or assumed that Africa had no history or culture). They were also disturbed by the world wars, in which they saw their countrymen not only dying for a cause that was not theirs but being treated as inferiors on the battlefield. They became increasingly aware, through their study of history, of the suffering and humiliation of Black people—first under the bondage of slavery and then under colonial rule. These views inspired many of the basic ideas behind Negritude: that the mystic warmth of African life, gaining strength from its closeness to nature and its constant contact with ancestors, should be continually placed in proper perspective against the soullessness and materialism of Western culture; that Africans must look to their own cultural heritage to determine the values and traditions that are most useful in the modern world; that committed writers should use African subject matter and poetic traditions and should excite a desire for political freedom; that Negritude encompasses the whole of African cultural, economic, social, and political values; and that above all, the value and dignity of African traditions and people must be asserted.

The Women's India Association (WIA) was formed in 1917 in Madras. The WIA was a vigorous organization that undertook to widen its scope of activities beyond fund-raising, social service and women's education. It sought to influence government policy on equal rights for women in some areas and was involved with the issues of suffrage, education and social reform. The National Council of Women in India (NCWI) was formed in 1925, and the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) in 1927.The AIWC, originally convened only to discuss women's education, became a permanent body. Its emphasis was on unity and women's upliftment through education, and social and legal reform. It also emphasized women's contribution to national development. By 1932, however, the AIWC had become involved with women's political rights and all questions which affected women and children as well as with social problems such as untouchability. With the influence of notable associations, women's question had gradually evolved from the perspective of uplift within the traditional framework to that of women's equality. A paradigm shift was brought by the tremendous efforts of women writers who constantly advocate for the inner and outer space for women.

The traditional view of gender stereotypes in socio-cultural set-up portrays men as moral, powerful, defensive, and authoritative beings while portraying women as sentimental, (irrational) frail, caring, and submissive(Nayer, 83-85). Thus, women are supposed to suit in this structure where they are weaker than men in every society that expects males to dominate in all family decision making is termed as patriarchy. It describes a political and social system ruled by men in which the women have inferior social and political status, including basic human rights (Kotack, 2005:198). In a patriarchal society, authority is vested upon the man who takes the responsibility for maintenance of the family and plays a dominant role to take any decision of the family (Sarkar, 1997).

In many cultures women are devalued as human beings from the day they are born; from very early childhood girls are made conscious of the fact that unlike their brothers, who are assets to the family, they are liabilities. In the process of civilization, girls are made to understand from their childhood that once they are married, they should learn how to adjust with their husbands and other relatives (Rahman,1984:30). Adjustment means total submission to the wills of husbands and other members of the family.

Literature reflects the self. The inner exploration of the self exhibits the truth about an individual. Human life is a framework of obligations, goals and accomplishments. Self-discovery is the enlightenment of an individual in the journey of life. According to Aristotle, "Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom." Human beings are obsessed with emotions and feelings. These qualities rule over or dominate human mind and heart which in turn close the eyes of consciousness.

The novels which I have chosen for my study-***'The Women of Brewster Place'***,'***Bailey's Café'*** and ***'Difficult Daughters'*** and ***'A Married Woman'***. Manju Kapur portrays the distinct dilemmas that the characters undergo and the resistance that is prominently visible in their denial to accept the patriarchal notion to use them as mere sex-objects is openly the subject of discussion in both the writers. Exploring their selves for establishing their individual identities, within the existing social structure is a big challenge for the woman who subsides in a different locale either within the marital relationship, extra-martial relationship or her sustenance in polyandry.

Need of the Study:-It is the universal need that one's self should be studied because the growth of any society or any nation depends on the growth of an individual. Therefore,

through the writings of these two contemporary women authors, we will be able to get an insight into the women's problems, as to how during the post colonial period in both orient and occidental literature ,the gradual shift could be seen to develop and understand the women selves. The self realisation that has occurred due to self-exploration is the resultant impact of the self-satisfaction and fulfilment of physical and psychological needs.

Hypothesis:-

- It is assumed that the writings of Gloria Naylor and Manju Kapur deals with the issues of Patriarchy and concern of women's subjugation particularly of the Afro-American women and Indian middle class respectively, with the universal problem of existential dilemma of exploring their selves to establish their individual identities.
- It is also assumed that Indian middle class women will be treated with biasness despite being educated under the umbrella of their traditional duty of either as a mother, wife or daughter.
- It is also assumed that Afro-American will be victimized due to the triple jeopardy of caste, colour and race.
- It is also assumed that the familial conflict will impinge on the individual thereby fragmenting his/her self and the resultant combat to assert one's point of view will be reflected in varied women protagonists.

- **Research Objectives:-**

  - To study the individual self of the women protagonists in the select novels of these two authors: ***The Women of Brewster Place , Bailey's Café, Difficult Daughters and A Married Woman.***

  - Investigation of the social, economical, political and cultural situation of women where the patriarchal social system exists and male domination is prominent.

  - To study the discussion how by portraying the lives of women in their novels, these novelists have contributed in raising the voices of women who are open to understand themselves and are constantly listening to their needs both physical and psychological, while sustaining themselves in a predominantly patriarchal or alien culture. Their novels show how these women are striving to dismantle the culture of silence, challenging oppressive practices enforced by their surroundings, their fate to establish their identities in contrast to their marginalized treatment in the society.

2. **Expected new Knowledge:**

   Human Strife to experience each situation with some common bond of understanding help in minimizing the burden of life altogether. Mutual sharing of bitter experiences could reduce the agony and sorrow being podcasted in destiny. Human relationships form the basis of any culture whether orient or occidental. The depiction of psychologicalturmoils and conflicts provide a true glimpse of the unending battle that goes in the mind. Shift into the imagination to identify oneself with one's roots is the process of assimilation and which becomes the best remedy in an alien experience.

BACKGROUND:-

Historians also note an important difference between the motivation of white suffragists, who were working primarily with gender equality in mind, and black suffragists, who saw voting rights as a key part of racial equity and a means of uplifting their communities.

In fact, the roots of the suffrage movement can be traced to the abolition movement, whose champions called for gender equality alongside an end to slavery as early as the mid-19th century, when abolitionist Sojourner Truth delivered her historic "Ain't I a Woman" speech at the 1851 Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio. In 1866, the poet and abolitionist Frances Ellen Watkins Harper would deliver a rousing speech of her own at the National Women's Rights Convention in New York City.

"We are all bound up together in one great bundle of humanity," she said. "And society cannot trample on the weakest and feeblest of its members without receiving the curse in its own soul."

BLACK WOMEN STILL FIGHT TO VOTE AFTER 1920

Despite the successes of the suffrage movement, obstacles remained even after 1920, says Jones, who was named after activist Ida B. Wells.

"When we look back at the 19th Amendment, even though it passed on paper, African American women were not allowed to exercise that freely," she says.

In much of the country, hurdles like poll taxes and literacy tests kept black voters disenfranchised until the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which outlawed discriminatory voting practices.

To this day, obstacles to voting persist, Jones says. And a new generation of politicians, such as Georgia's Stacey Abrams, have taken up the fightagainst voter suppression.

"African American women continued to fight for and advocate for the voiceless, the poor in the urban and rural areas, the uneducated, and the immigrant community," Jones says. "All of this is bound up into one big issue: true democracy."

'Patriarchy,' wants women to align into the marginalized framework of society. The men have always enjoyed a free life while women have been in constraints. Patriarchy either rejects woman's choice, or restricts them. It promotes the philosophy of women subjugation, its exploitative standards and methods for refusing their rights. In most of the cases, we find women are conditioned to suppress their 'self' in order to conform to the norms of society and live under the conditions of patriarchal hegemony. As woman's conduct is not a matter of her choice, rather it is conditioned by the norms set by patriarchal establishment. In patriarchal society, the wives are expected to be 'modest', 'submissive and 'dutiful' to their husbands and other members of the family. Culture of many societies does not permit equality between men and women. Being a victim of patriarchal system, Manju Kapur and Gloria Naylor saw things very closely about how women are given the position of a dependent where they cannot assert their right to liberty, the right to a fulfilling life and the right to independence in any form. As a result of that they dared to challenge this patriarchal culture and gender stereotypes in their novels, to break it apart violently and subvert the theory through their protagonist. My purpose of research is to delve into the personal and political forces of patriarchy that have subjugated women and laid them broken under the pretext of traditional, cultural norms and familial values and the double oppression being faced by the third world women. Women's ability to explore their selves to adjust to their circumstances paves a way either for their only survival or their survival with only victory.

3. **Review of Literature:** This would be an effort to take a complete review of the literature, particularly related to the postcolonial period/postmodern period.The special focus will be laid on the novelists of India and Afro-America. More particularly feminist novelists will be given more space as far as the review is concerned. Subsequently, an effort will be made to survey the novels written by the Indian and Afro-American Writers giving scope for distinct themes in their literary contributions. This will help in giving a comprehensive survey of the novels of Gloria Naylor & Manju Kapur, in order to make an acceptable argument for the present study.

Manju kapur has been surrounded by controversy ever since her ground-breaking novel in 'a married woman' was published in 1992. She tried to be vocal with respect to the Indian middle class woman who endeavors to break the patriarchy and get herself involve into the lesbian relationship. Nevertheless, my purpose of research is not to indulge in any controversy related to her work but to read her novel from the perspective of patriarchy, women subjugation and in terms of her secular approaches that she quoted in the novel 'a married woman'.

Contribution to Literature:-

The present exploration of the novels of Gloria Naylor and Manju Kapur with respect of the theme of patriarchy and marginalization of women would be widely essential to comprehend the major cause of the sufferings and plight of women particularly Indian and Afro-American women. Though the theme is old but it has been widely discussed in these days. It has created immense interest among readers and particularly women to read real relationships happened in the societies in their works. By reading such works women have got awareness to know, stand up and fight for their rights in society. The changing man-woman relationship in the modern times have showed the reality of breaking the conformity of gender stereotypes. It has become prerogative to understand that apart from man's basic needs of food and shelter, the emotional needs should also be satisfied and the acknowledgement of self-realization is not age or gender specific . The autonomy and equality is meaningful only when it is executed at the proper time irrespective of the locale. Thus, democratic rights laid in the constitution become practically true in the changing modern times. Hence, man should not consider the woman as the other rather he should know that the woman is aware about herself. She is constantly on the verge of Self-Exploration**.**

4. Research Methodology:

The intended research is qualitative by nature; thick descriptive method of analyzing the text is used as methodology. The critical survey of the novel is done in the light of 'Indian feminism' and 'Afro-American feminism'. The original text of the novel is the basic tool of the researcher, although other related literary texts, critical books, journal articles and electronic media has been used as secondary source of help by the researcher. The websites have also been used as sources for help in throwing light on the topic given. The methods

of research have been critical, evaluative, analytical, interpretive, descriptive and comparative. These methods would be employed as per the issues taken for deliberation and reference.

Data Collection: The data would be in the form of the primary and secondary sources.

Primary Sources: The original texts of the selected work as:

1) **Gloria Naylor**

The Women of Brewester Place,(1982)

Bailey's Cafe, (1992)

2)**Manju Kapur**

*A Married Woman*2002

Difficult Daughters, 1998

Secondary Sources: The reviews, articles, interviews, Gloria Naylor and Manju Kapur's works published in various journals, magazines and in the books.

Plan of Work:

Chapter one:-

Introduction

The first chapter introduces the experiences which deals with several strong-willed women who live in a rundown housing project on Brewster Place in an unidentified eastern city; across three decades, they struggle against poverty, bigotry, and weak, troublesome circumstantial outside factors. The black women are doubly oppressed. First they are black and second they are women. Their own men are responsible for their poor condition. They feel alien among whites who consider their supremacy due to their colour and treat them as slaves. Gloria Naylor has projected the women who are either abandoned by their Husbands or are have established illicit affairs and therefore cut off from their families and land themselves into the Brewster Place. Here, seven women come together due to different reasons. One thing is clear that the society is engulfed with rapes, tortures, cheating and sexual molestation .These seven women become the victims and are faced to take up their lives all alone. Thus absence of male partner and economic needs compel them to take up the occupation of prostitution. They are being cut off from the main stream. The Afro-American women get an unfair treatment. The only relief they get is through the companionship. On the other hand in Indian family settings and societies: culture, political and socio-economic factors contribute to the sufferings and marginalization of women.

Various issues such as the betrayal of cheating partner, broken marriage, or under cultural and social pressure, fake religious belief, women's accepted subordination to patriarchy in order to conform with social norms, their lack of courage to raise their voice against injustice and torture due to fear of children's future and for the life ahead, women's victimization, women's horrible plight in Middle class society, polygamy, rape and child molestation at heart wrenching level. The theme of patriarchy, women's fight to challenge patriarchal norms and demand for freedom has been discussed in detail in contextualizing Liberal Feminism and Radical Feminism.

Chapter Two:-

Review of related literature

Beginning of the self- concept:-

Being able to identify self as a distinct object is an essential first step in the development and advance of a self- concept; in fact, it is the total of opinions that individually has about him or her. And the next step includes social factors. The knowledge of self-concept has age old. This factor is stated in the vedic philosophy as ahamkara; a term originating almost 3,000 years ago; as well, in eastern spiritual performs such as yoga. Some psychologists such as Rogers and Maslow have a comprehensive role in popularizing the knowledge of self- concept in the west. Regarding rogers, everyone strives to obtain an ideal self. Additionally, Rogers theorized that psychologically healthy individuals actively move away from roles shaped by others' prospects, and instead look within themselves for justification. Conversely, neurotic individuals have self-concepts that do not match their skills. These individuals are afraid to receive their experiences as valid, so they distort them, either to protect themselves or to win approval from others (Aaronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2007). Based on the self- categorization theory that proposed by turner, the self-concept consists of at least two levels; which included a personal identity and a social one. In other words, one's self-evaluation depend on self-perceptions and how others distinguish them. The self-concept can replacement rapidly between the personal and social individuality (Guimond, Chatard, Martinot, crisp, & redersdorff, 2006). In this regard, children and youths begin participating social identity into their self-concept in elementary school by measuring their situation among peers (Trautwein, lüdtke, Marsh, & Nagy, 2009). Furthermore, through age five, receiving from peers has an important influence on children's self-concept, affecting their behavior and academic success (Gest, Rulison, Davidson, & welsh, 2008). In the same vein, Cooley (1902) one of the famous sociologists applied the term of looking glass self to recommend that other individuals save as a mirror in which we see ourselves expanding on this idea. Similarly, mead (1934) stated that we often come to distinguish ourselves by imagining what important others think of us and then incorporating these perceptions into our self-concept. Furthermore, it is interesting that when Gallup

confirmed his apes, those who were raised in separation without exposure to their peers could not identify themselves in the mirror (seymour,1973).

Morrison, Walker, Lorde, Marshall and Shange concentrate on delineating the essential African wisdom and culture still alive in the new world black communities. They consciously link African rhythms, dance, style, folk lore, magic to a uniquely African American women's culture and ultimately to their literature Houston Baker remarks in *Working of the Spirit* that the "primacy of non- material transactions in the African's initial negotiations of slavery and the slave trade led to a privileging of the roles and figures of medicine men, griots, conjures priests and priestess" (Baker 38). The sense of community of African American society is strongly established among women and African American women writers have focused on the bond among black women.

After independence Indian writers yielded some prominent Indian English novels. The novels were now not idealistic but realistic. They mainly raised the common social issues and also the inner workings of the human psyche. The clash between tradition and modernity, between East and West cultures and adaptations are some of the major theme. The themes handled by the older generation of novelists in English had for a long time remained predictably pan-Indian: the national movement, partition of the country, the clash between tradition and modernity, faith and rationality or similar timeworn clichés of east-west confrontation, disintegration of joint family, exploitation of women etc. (Mukherjee 173)

Kamala Markandeya is the first postcolonial woman novelist who took a chief place in Indian English literature. She is concerned towards the poor and the oppressed people like Mulk Raj Anand. Some of her famous writings are Nectar in a Sieve (1954) ,Some Inner Fury (1955) ,A Silence of Desire (1983), Possession (1963) , A Hand full of Rice (1966) .

Bhabhani Bhattacharya, a prolific writer got the Central Sahitya Academy Award for his novel, Shadow from Ladakh (1967). In all his novels, Bhattacharya reflects a true picture of India and its struggle for Independence. Some of his novels are, So Many Hungers, Music for Mohini, He Who Rides a Tiger and A Goddess Named Gold.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala is another prolific woman writer of independent India. Born in Germany and subsequently migrated to England, she did MA in English and married an Indian architect. Her novels are To Whom She Will (1955), The Nature of Passion (1956), Esmond in India

(1958), The Householder (1960), A Backward Place (1965) and Heat and Dust (1975). Jhabvala_s major themes of her novels are- East-West combat, tradition and modernity.

Some other Indian English novelists are Attia Hosain, Nayanatara Sehgal, Anita Desai, Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh, Chaman Nahal, Rama Mehta, Arun Joshi, Shashi Deshpande, Gita Mehta etc. All these writers have portrayed the real picture of Indian society. They dared to talk about the burning social, political and gender issues. Due to the growth of the national feelings, the content of the novels of Indian writers in English brought about a tremendous change. They began to touch different dimensions, detecting the human psyche. They discussed various issues like gender inequality, the stereotypes of patriarchal values, male prominence, familial issues, and the burdens of traditions laid upon them and their self- different perspectives on these problems in their fiction. The focus of Indian novelists transferred from the social to personal domain and back to the social issues. The writers efficiently reveal a person‘s quest for the self and identity. Coincidentally, the women writers of the period contributed fresh themes and offered brilliant discussions through their novels. With their feminine sensibility, they unveiled new sight of human nature, women's conscience, their status in the patriarchal society, East-West combat, and man-woman relationship.

In this context of Indian English novels, it is quite clear that after independence Indian English novelists wrote important novels that reflect the humors of the society in a factual manner. The Indian society was in transition period, which was changing from the old culture giving new sight of cultural menace due to the airs of the Western culture. The shattering experiences such as partition, the breakdown of the old traditional, social, cultural, moral values, the instability of the new generations, the increasing zest for modernism, national values, provocation for Gandhi‘s ideologies, humanism, the transformation of fictional theme, style, language and the development of different fictional forms are some of the major traits of post-independence novels.

Chapter Three:-

The Women of Brewster Place & Bailey's Cafe

The depth of Naylor's works and their socio-political concerns definitely necessitate further comprehensive studies to understand her art and thematic concerns. The justapposition of the

rich, complex and diverse African American experiences in Naylor's fictional world offers enough scope for the study of all her works with a view to finding a common thread of concern in the light of her major themes of race, class and gender. Naylor's work as a product of an African-American writer , as an example of work positing a feminist or women's studies agenda as a focus of influence studies or inter-textual comparisons as a study of narrative and rhetorical methods and as an exponent of popular culture. A few critics have also examined the textual affinity between her works and the works of other African American writers. A major chunk of studies on Naylor has focussed on her primary concern ,i.e. black women ,their tribulations, desires and disappointments. Critics have also focused attention on her technique of writing :inter-textual configuration, magical realism and her bridging of European conventions with African art. History bears testimony to the fact that black women have suffered greatest indignities. Gloria Naylor has successfully captured the American conquest motif and the subsequent hierarchical relationship between the subject and object and the consequent hostile social set up of disparity doubly marginalized the coloured daughters of America.

Gloria Naylor made her foray into the world of literature with **The Women of Brewster Place: A Novel in Seven Stories** (1982) and became the new talent to watch out for by winning the American Book Award for the Best First Novel in 1983.With the publication of five ore novels, namely Linden Hills(1985), Mama Day (1988),Bailey's Café(1992)and The Men of Brewster Place(1988). Naylor has been accepted as a passionate, sincere and powerful force to reckon with. In addition to her novels, Naylor has also written essays, screen plays, stage adaptation of Bailey's café and has edited a book of short stories for children, Children of the Night: The Best Short Stories by Black Writers 1964 till 2005.

One of the first things that Mattie notices about her new neighbourhood is the two-story-high brick wall that stands only six feet from her apartment. The wall, she realizes, will block out the sun for all the houseplants she has brought with her. In her Southern home, the plants had thrived. Thus the wall is a foreshadowing symbol of the changes in Mattie's life.

As Mattie moves into Brewster Place, she reflects on the circumstances in her past that have led her here. She begins with Butch Fuller, a handsome young man who flirts with her and eventually talks her into having sex. Butch Fuller becomes the father of Mattie's son, though Butch plays no further role in their lives, except that the son, Basil, turns out to be very much

like his father. Mattie Michael, the motherly figure on the block, grew up in Tennessee and arrived on Brewster Place via repeated betrayals by the men in her life.

When Mattie tells her mother, Fannie, that she is pregnant, her mother tries to allay Mattie's fears. She tells Mattie that there is nothing to be ashamed of in having a baby. Even Mattie's father, Sam, is decent when he learns about the pregnancy. Sam is quiet for a few days as he thinks over the question of what to do. He reminds Mattie that he has always been good to her. Sam's attitude changes, though, once he finds out that the baby's father is not Fred Watson, a man Sam had considered a good candidate as Mattie's husband. When Mattie will not tell her father the name of the man who got her pregnant, Sam loses his temper and beats Mattie. Mattie leaves the house and decides to stay with Eva until the older woman dies. By then, Mattie has saved enough money to make a down payment on Eva's house and make it her own. Mattie has to work two jobs, though, to pay the mortgage. In the meanwhile, her son, Basil, grows up.

As a boy, Basil had been sickly, which made Mattie spoil him a lot. She always thought she needed to defend him at school, too. When things did not work out at one school, she moved Basil to a new school. She always gave into him rather than disciplining and disappointing him. Eva had pointed this out to Mattie, telling her that kind of love was not healthy for the boy, but Mattie chose to ignore the older woman's advice. Mattie thought she knew what was best for her son.

As an adult, Basil's faults are more obvious, but Mattie still chooses to ignore them. He cannot hold down a job and often comes to her for money. He has no friends, or at least he never brings them home. She buys him a car and often has to give him money for gas. When she asks him to help her around the house, such as cutting the grass, Basil has excuses as to why the chores must wait for another day. Still, Mattie rationalizes that Basil is a sensitive boy. He needs special attention. She must forgive his faults.

One night, she receives a phone call from Basil. He is saying something about a fight in a bar and being arrested. She has trouble understanding him not only because his voice is not clear but also because she cannot fathom that her son would get into so much trouble. When she goes to the police station to see Basil, he begs her to pay bail so he can get out. He complains about the broken toilet and the bedbugs in his bed in the cell. He cannot stand to spend another night there.

Mattie, rather than trusting a public defender, purchases the services of an expensive lawyer to defend Basil. Despite her efforts, Basil leaves her and in this way she reaches Brewster Place. There she collaborates other women namely, Etta Mae, Kiswana, Ciel, Lorraine , Theresa and Cora Lee. She turns out to be a motherly figure for them. Exhibiting the varied backgrounds and experiences of seven different women, the seven stories of its subtitle can be read separately, but they are united by their setting and by characters who reappear from one story to the next. The stories also perform a kind of counterpoint to one another, with various parallels and contrasts. However varied the courses of their lives have been, the women now share a common fate: They have all arrived at the dead-end ghetto of Brewster Place, not only a racial and socioeconomic enclave but also a dumping ground for used women.

The reflection of the seven women tell the pathetic live stories who are facing the hardships and struggles in a social structure that is deliberately drafted to portray their weaker position in the society.Many sub-themes are interwoven during the exploration of selves of different protagonists. Character delineates various strands both negative such as lack of morality, victims of racism, false motherhood, victim of rape and positive as acceptance and assimilation to their surroundings , living in their dreamy world, ideology of sisterhood and reclaiming their lost ground to reposition themselves in better harmony with this world. The breaking of patriarchy, withstanding with their culture and tradition and emerging as the embodiments of strength who have pass on the legacy of hard work, perseverance and natural silence. Their exploration does not bring any comfort in the fantasy world rather they are seen in the real world with vigour and strife.

Bailey's café examines black women's lives in American society which still caught up in restrictive notions of color, gender and culture. In fact, black women have surrounded themselves particularly with sisterly support as they attempted to negotiate their way through the triple problems of race, class, and gender prejudices. The bond shared by these women has enabled them to survive and helps them to begin an altogether new life at eve's place. the centre of this female solidarity is eve who attracts women torn apart by racial and gender conflict of American society. This racial and gender conflict prevailing in society tears these women apart and pushes them to the edge of the world where they have to survive on their own.eve represents the collective bond between all these women. Her boarding house acts as a place of solace and comfort for them. They get healing from eve who acts "as a matriarch and guides for most of the characters" (ivey89); they feel free

from patriarchal jaws that has crippled their lives.

Chapter 4:-

Difficult Daughters & A Married Woman

Manju Kapur is one of the most famous Indian English novelists in the 90s. Kapur's writings reflect man-woman relationship, human desire, longing, body, gender discrimination, marginalization, rebellion and protest. The protagonists are caught in the continuous dichotomy between the personal needs and the institutional and social obligations and responsibilities in Kapur's novels

It somehow shows that relations are more important, family is on priority in Indian context. The mind of a woman escapes from the boredom of the responsibility that is put on her shoulders but her resistance is temporary and her assertion is within the limit of patriarchy. Thus openness and assimilation could be seen in the protagonist. They believe in compromise

Kapur also deals with the role of woman as daughter, wife and mother; she is a trend settler and she has brought the women protagonists from the shackled suffering women to daring and amazing women. She has given womananewimageofboldness.Kapur'sheroinesnegotiatefortheirindependenceandfinda respectable place in society. The heroine is mentally advanced in the real sense of the word, whether she is Virmati (DD) Astha (A Married Woman), Nisha (Home), Nina(the Immigrant), or Shagun (Custodian). The female protagonists are the new women who hail from the middle class, but challenge the existing socio- cultural patriarchal system. In the social milieu, they are educated, modern, intelligent, bold and assertive. Even though they try to transcend the social hierarchy by demolishing it, they often undergo serious psychological traumas in the absence of an alternative, planned feminist ideology that may give them freedom, security and peace of mind.

In her quest for identity, Virmati is the central character of the novel, rebels against tradition. She is impelled by the inner need to feel loved as an individual. The title of the novel ***Difficult Daughters*** is an indication to the message that a woman, who tries to search for an identity, is branded as a difficult daughter by the family and the society as well the story tells how she is torn between family duty and illicit love. Virmati falls in

love with the professor who develops an intimate relationship with Virmati. She has to fight against the power of the mother as well as the oppressive forces of patriarchy symbolized by the mother figures. In the patriarchal Indian society, marriage is a means of deliverance from being socially condemned and it relieves a woman from the sense of insecurity and uncertainty. The older generation marriage is no reason to rebel, it was accepted as part of life's pleasure and was a phase of imitating certain dharma's associate with social and religious institutions. Of course love was not the prerequisite or desired basis for marriage.

The very course of a daughter's life changes due to the mother's attitude. Daughters are difficult only when life becomes difficult for them.

Though like all relationships, this one is also bilateral and is based on interdependence; the dependence of the daughter is greater than that of the mother. Authoritative and autocratic attitude of the mother may mar the very personality of daughter and it may make a pseudo-rebel out of an otherwise disciplined and motivated daughter as in the case of Virmati.

Ida in Difficult Daughters begins a journey into the history of her mother with a purpose to discover herself. What started as alienation ends up in complete identification. But not all daughters are as fortunate as Ida. Virmati herself could never belong to her mother. Her pleasures, her pains, her pathetic life as a mistress and then a second wife, all remained her private sorrows. She could never share them with her mother. Kasturi never attempts to understand her. There seems a barrier between them which Virmati fails to pull down. Ida tells the readers:"From time to time,Virmati glanced furtively as her mother and the wall she encountered forbade her from making the attentive gestures that might made the journey bear able for both"

A Married Woman is a novel which is the representation of women all over the world has been immeasurable in their appearance and nature, as they have been affluent in their structure and variety in their character. Taken up from the varied times and different conditions, even an indiscriminate illustration off these resemblance and likeness so on unveils the comprehensive stretch and scope of richness of their morality, content and analysis, their colors and outline. It is in anticipation of and preparation against the backdrop of both customs, practice and uniqueness, their overwhelming and flexible wants in regard to the women's up surging status, their order and ranking elsewhere in relation to the Indian conditions. My research concentrates on the beginning of new era and sets of values realization of new modes of life and views, breeding of new hopes and fear too. However, there is no rejection of the truth that the onetime glorification and adoration visions of women

have passed through some unexpected change over all over the world, specifically in the 19th and the 20thcenturies.

In accordance with the Indian customs and culture, a woman must acknowledge her husband in every possible way. She must make the home enjoyable and pleasurable for her husband. She must cook the food for him, and all other household chores and take care of her kids. She must never discuss about money and she must approve and submit to her husband's all needs. However, what occur when the age old custom and practices lose their values and the woman no longer assume her life should be single-minded in the restricted and limited manner? This aspect is the fundamental and basic subject of Manju Kapur's spell binding and engrossing novel ***'A Married Woman'*** in which her main character, Astha Vadera, goes through significant changes against the background and scene of India that is also developing. There is a change in values, virtues and women have begun admitting themselves as equal to their counter parts. Yet, the high expectations of feminism have been vaporized in the current social environment. The state between man and woman becomes one of the organized and integrated mutual dependence. Yet, the woman has to work for her emancipation without letting herself to her fate, gender, equivalence still remains an illusion.

Chapter 5 :-

A Comparative Analysis

Although Gloria Naylor and Manju Kapur are two polarities , one is Indian and the other Afro-American, but both are feminist in their approach to writing . They give primary place to women protagonists in their respective novels namely **The Women of Brewster Place, Bailey's café, Difficult Daughters and A Married Woman.** They are bringing forth the different themes in their novels which exploring the self of different circumstances. The social and individual perception to take the challenges of life are different. The cultural, political and historical milieu compels the protagonist to reverberate or progress in any relationship. The willingness to bring harmony either to identify or finding their self –

identity overshadows their background and their winsome personality enthralls and captivates the readers and we feel associated with both their happiness and sorrows. Their **'Exploration of Self'** does not limit to themselves alone rather it expands and we relate ourselves with their selves to bring the solution. This empathy of being together is generated by both the writers in a natural and artistic manner. The willingness to achieve autonomy and to break the shackles of patriarchy is predominantly reflected is due to the spread of education and the migration to the developing cities. Breach of discipline makes the life chaotic and the women turn up as sufferers. Due to the absence of the familial control, the protagonists land themselves into the dark side of life and that becomes the cause of their misery. The incessant tortures, rapes and sexual perversities lead to the fall of the women characters. Their victory becomes the survival itself. On the other hand the guilt conscious souls succumb to their misfortunes .The denial to male sub-ordination is seen dominantly in Manju Kapur's heroines. They revolt against the patriarchy and want to be equal to their male partners and pay them in the same coin. But the human weakness to be in the relationships brings them back on the right track. Thus, they compensate their loss and are able to compose by adjustments and balances. Gloria Naylor's heroines find happiness through the bond of sisterhood. The major pitfall is that there is no come back due to their weak social structure, which treats the women as the other. They are at the worst side. Their incompatibility with their male partners cannot be established because they are thrown into ghettos due to their adverse circumstances. Their resistance to stop any misuse of their bodies indicates that their struggle is more intense and painful as compared to the Indian woman who has their future security as being tied into marital bond. Thus, marital life becomes a blessing for Indian women who are not compelled to earn their livelihood and they are socially accepted and enjoy Indian culture. Only the difference is of ideology. The short landscape into the dreamy world proves to be a real teacher and their return is safe. It is not possible with respect to the heroines of Gloria Naylor as they are victims of triple jeopardy. They are suppressed due to their caste, color & race and thus feel uprooted. Thus, their exploration is more deep and pinching. The desire of belongingness remains unaccomplished for these protagonists. There is a need that individual and social agencies should come forward to see the plight of any person, who is engulfed to bear all the sufferings silently. But the silence should be broken and the third women must be given adequate space not only physical but also the psychological space. The narrow prejudices and stereotypes should be abolished as man is born free but everywhere he is found in chains. These chains are man-made. So, man should be awakened

and rightful efforts should be put to break the barriers that are raised on the basis of caste, colour or religion. All educational excellence and progress become meaningless if it binary equality and harmony is not achieved. Woman should be given equal space both in the house and in the world outside. The wrong notion of visualizing any woman as a sex object should be shunned off and respect should be given to her. Women is the life giving force who assumes a variety of roles: a sister, a mother, a daughter and who nourishes not only a family but becomes an iconic symbol of fertility.

Oppression is an offence. Women have to suffer double oppression. One of being a woman and the other due to their physical appearance. Whether they reside in India, African or America they would be telling their untold miseries through their experiences which opens up the manifold layers of the ugly picture of our false traditional, cultural and religious practices.

The dreariness of the gray tenement buildings, the oppressiveness of the wall, and the segregation make the women of Brewster Place racial, social, and economic victims. Yet they come together finally to tear down the wall, which increasingly seems a manifestation of their oppression, using "knives, plastic forks, spiked shoe heels, and even bare hands" to dismantle it. With this one symbolic act, they demonstrate their determination to change their lives for the better.

Brewster Place is a dead-end street in fact and in symbol, for the women who move there are trapped by their hopes and fears. For them, Brewster Place is both the birth and the death of their dreams. The brick wall that separates Brewster Place from the nicer neighborhoods represents the wall of prejudice and shame, racism and sexism that must be smashed by the residents. They alone can effect change in this climate of hostility and mistrust. The garbage in the alley symbolizes the character of the street toughs who run drugs, rape, and kill here. No one can stop them until the women on Brewster Place join forces and souls to fight back courageously against the human trash terrorizing their neighborhood.

Despite the violence in these women's lives, the language that Naylor uses is as potent and engaging as poetry-colourful and provocative, realistic but not bitter. Thus critics praise Naylor's style, even as some suggest that hers is not a new story. Her characters are as archetypal but they are also convincing and vivid too. They depict the real life problems of the black women who were subject to triple jeopardy.

The Women of Brewster Place is a complex novel, and coming to terms with it may be difficult for some young adult readers. Any novel confronting racism and sexism will inspire many reactions, from uncritical acceptance to outright rejection. Naylor's book, however, is an extremely worthy novel for many reasons. First, it serves as a testament to the lives of African American women who have maintained self-respect and hope in the face of suffering and who have been the backbone of their communities; various young readers will identify with and appreciate this aspect. Second, Americans whose lives are generally left secret are represented in this book; students, especially mainstream students, should be exposed to these depictions. Most important, the book confronts significant questions of morality for a democratic, pluralistic society; young people should explore these issues in a mature and serious manner.

The book is to a certain extent a political treatise on the effects of poverty, ignorance, and violence, but it is also a love story. Yet it is not a love story in the traditional sense. Symbolized by the wall separating Brewster Place from the life of the city, racism affects all of the character's lives. Naylor does not harp on historic injustices; racism is a fact of life, a real force that these characters cannot escape, although they proceed with their lives as best they can. Some, such as Mattie, Kiswana, and Lucielia, seem to transcend racism, maintaining the ability to dream, hope and love. Others, such as Etta, rebel but never escape the effects of racism. Those like Cora internalize racist attitudes, feeling no self-worth and believing that they and their children deserve nothing. The reader is left wondering what these women's lives would have been like in a world without racism-what beauty and triumph might have been revealed.

The second and more inclusive theme that the novel explores is of the community of women. Unlike the men in their world, who deal with social injustice in violent and often self-destructive ways, the women of Brewster Place cope with the effects of racism and injustice by forming nurturing networks and...

Her novels has been the perfect medium for passing on the problems and experiences of women. Women prefer this genre to express their deference and defiance. Manju Kapur reveals insight into the holiness of marriage and family, which is profoundly established in social convictions and practices. The author cites exploitation of women in patriarchy, feudalism and cultural norms. Naylor chooses to dismiss a survival with a partner who manhandles and slander her. Consequent upon she strives to become stable, strong and independent under horrible strain and pushes on to restore self- and live life of fulfillment. While exposing

characters, Manju Kapur stood up to the male centric practices as well as gave a brief look at her serious feelings coming out of the time of long quietness implying that she had the ability to openly fight the subjection of women under wedlock.

The novel Difficult Daughters sheds light on the concept of marriage and family which is deeply rooted in cultural beliefs. In Afro-American, domestic violence has traditionally controlled the prevailing cultural practices. Amid the stereotypes and circumstances, the discourse of Manju Kapur analyses the helplessness of women in the patriarchal system as a whole which controls both domestic and private realms of her life. In Indian context, domestic violence has traditionally being controlled and affect the prevailing cultural practices. Amid the stereotypes and circumstances, the discourse of Manju Kapur analyses the helplessness of women in the patriarchal system as a whole which controls both domestic and private realms of her life.

Manju Kapur has seen things very closely about how women are given the position of a dependent where they cannot affirm their right to liberty, the right to a fulfilling life and the right to independence in any form. Patriarchy has always promulgated its philosophy, subjugating women and exploiting standards and methods for refusing women's rights. They were focused to surrender their option for allowing themselves to conform to the conditions. Their conduct is not a matter of choice; it is rather determined by the criteria set by the patriarchal establishment. Confronted with inequality, women consider it as a matter of coerced preference. If they want to be different, they will again face external resistance but will seek gratification from within.

Chapter 6 : Conclusion

In this last chapter, I have summarized the results of my study:

The different traditional views and gender stereotypes about Men and Women and socio-cultural set-up portrays men as moral powerful, defensive authoritative while women are portrayed as ‘sentimental’, ‘irrational’ ‘frail’ ‘caring’ and ‘submissive’-

- It was the call of the hour to speak out, breaking the age-old long silence.
- I have attempted to assume an impartial approach with the references from book and related critical books and journals.

- Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex "*has had a worldwide impact. Most feminists consider it to have been the impetus behind what is called the 'second wave' of feminism" (qtd. in Arp 265). She argued that men are able to mystify women and this mystification and stereotyping worked as a means to perpetuate and strengthen patriarchy. Women too accepted this stereotype and were thus a means of their own oppression. We may quote **Simon de Beauvoir**," One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" **Beauvoir 295**). **Laura Maguire,** further adds more to this statement of Simon," the roles we associate with women are not given to them by birth, not by virtue of their biology, but rather are socially constructed. Women are taught what they're supposed to be in life, what kinds of roles they can or can't perform in virtue of being of ***"The Second Sex."***
- Men the more prominent than women impose their own concepts and definitions on the masculine/ feminine identities.
- The person is most often introspective within the territory of the familial and social boundations. The conservative culture limits women within the four walls of their house by not granting them economic or political independence, but assuming them to work day and night as domestic slaves. It is clearly visible in the novels of Manju Kapur. Similarly, the perception for the Negros has not changed despite their fore bearing of racial prejudices for a couple of years. Thus the novelist, Gloria Naylor has adequately measured the inner recesses of the wounded selves who are seen making their adjustments in their black communities. This class consciousness affects a person's psychology in a negative way and retards his complete development. As plato states, 'man is born free, but everybody he is found in chains'. Thus, the chains of class-discrimination impose certain restrictions on individual's growth and are well seen in the working of the protagonists of Gloria Naylor. Thus, alienation creates disparity and further sub-divisions in the close knit structure of the society.
- Her protagonist proves that women subjugation or empowerment is a matter of choice on the part of woman herself. Choice determines one's actions. Patriarchy either rejects a woman's choice, or proposed a restricted range of choices. Being a victim of patriarchal systems, the women asserts to take their stand being the marginalized group.
- Discrimination to define gender roles are manmade and are deep rooted which causes trials and turbulence in one's life to survive in a 'claustrophobic world'. It presents

disintegrating human values and the plight of middle class and black ethnic minority group.

- Marriage is considered the most sanctified institution but has turned out as an 'exploitative institution', where as the Afro-American women are concerned. They are the left-outs and deserted women, who are left to their fate without any prior intimation. Thus their husband wife relationship is very weak and they are only objects or commodities and controlled by patriarchal head like a puppet. But this security is even conditional in Indian context, provided women full fills the house-hold duties in the Indian context. Any breach of faith or duty ultimately breaks the relationship. Thus, it is case sensitive. Where the men world take the priority in taking the decision. But in these two authors it is something new that women take the lead and then decide their future course of action. Thus, security lies in securing future through education. No culture or tradition is fixed, the flexibility can exist anywhere at anyplace.
- Women are being trained and shaped since their childhood to obey their parents and their husband. A slight deviation on their part is taken seriously and they are being punished according to the severity of their offence. Being a lesbian is considered a taboo in Indian society. Manju Kapur has dared to explore the inner desires of an Indian woman to feel attracted towards other woman. Although this openness was taken with severe criticism. But this initiative on her part open new vistas for the new woman who is educated and is ready to take independent decisions.
- In this way women are themselves responsible for their plight if they do not come forward and try to break free from the patriarchal hegemony. The treatment meted out to women made them think of their identity and freedom "And freedom means to breathe freely; to meet people, to have an openness of experience…", *(Principals of Literary Criticism*) as women are restricted only to kitchen, beauty parlors, they are kept in veil in order to avoid exchanging looks from strangers.
- There is a need that the evil practices such as polygamy, polyandry child abuse, rapes and killings should be banned so that women are safe and are not thrown into the business of prostitution.
- Assimilation with the new culture is good for an individual self. In Manju Kapur's novels assimilation has to be done in the similar culture. No the contrary, In Gloria Naylor women are edged and their assimilation is almost a dreamy world.

- It is not only the male members of the house but the females also who take advantage of their superior status in the family hierarchy and pass on the stereotype, thus adding to their misery. Man was the ideal, the norm and woman the follower or the 'other', attempting to achieve perfection and trying to be like the man.
- The reason women don't stand up for their rights against oppression is that, their own family members and culture make them submissive, docile and passive. They easily compromise with the hostility of their male counterpart. By challenging the age-long silence in the name of equality, these two writers sought to uphold and establish that, all kinds of oppression, abuse and acts of violence are in no way justifiable.
- Women have always been made to suffer from disappointment, disillusionment, and frustration which arise from social restrictions. Almost every woman faces harsh criticism like that of Manju Kapur, who tries to write in a courageous manner about the male-centered society as well as by protesting against it.

- Dependency on relationship is must for survival. We form relationships to lead a meaningful life. May be a friend, a lover, a son, a daughter, a mother, a father, a wife, a husband , a brother or a sister. The same formulation of relationship is traced by both the novelists i.e. Manju Kapur and Gloria Naylor in their respective novels Difficult Daughters and The Women of Brewster Place. Sisterhood is dominant in Gloria Naylor while Husband-wife and mother-daughter bonding is strengthened through the portrayal of three generation women protagonists in Manju Kapur novel.
- The chapter concludes that the problem of each individual is universal. He/She wants to assert his autonomy and tries to fit himself/herself in the cultural setup that demands certain obligations on him/her. But it is the duty of each person to put the society in the right direction as the society is the reflection of man himself. If the persons who surrounds us are committing follies then we should revolt and explore ourselves with the right perspective and should not fall a victim anymore. In this way, we will leave a healthy legacy for the forthcoming generations who could freely execute their dreams in the real world .And their exploration will not disappoint rather it will become a pleasure seeking experience. Thus, there is no harm in contending against the contentious tenets of patriarchy which have been considered truths since centuries. Throughout my research work, I have made efforts to bring the issue of women's relegation to an incessant scrutiny, so that the exploration of the self can be accomplished fruitfully and hence becomes meaningful.

Findings of the Study:

- Both Gloria Naylor and Manju Kapur have made 'female' as the centre of their writings.
- Women problems are not inborn rather they are created through circumstances.
- The stereotypical attitude and biasness to perceive woman as an object who does not carry her own self is clearly visible through the treatment they receive at the other end.
- It is a deliberate intention of both the writers irrespective of the country they belong to, they are open to discuss all types of needs of women.
- Women have always been made to suffer from disappointment, disillusionment, and frustration which arise from social restrictions. Almost every woman faces harsh criticism like that of Manju Kapur, who tries to write in a courageous manner about the male-centered society as well as by protesting against it.
- The importance of relationships is understood by each of us. It is clearly found that the broken relationship bears a negative impact on human psyche. One is tied in the close periphery of the family and society. Any degression, undoubtedly curbs the normal growth of self and the individual is deviated and is compelled to get away from morality. Thus, the protagonists of each author tries to restore balance through their strife to form harmonious relationship and to accept their fate as their destiny.
- Private sorrows have got their hearings in the public. Thus, the guilt conscience doesn't keep dwindling rather the public voice supports to find the solution. In this way, through induction theory we can generalize the specific self of the protagonists to the female of all types irrespective of colour, caste, race or class.

Scope of the Present Study:-

- A Comparative study of Male versus Female Self can be taken of post-colonial writers.
- Agony and Conflict in the Major protagonists of Manju Kapur can be taken for study/
- Adjustment and Accepance through Experiential Learning in the novels of Manju Kapur and Gloria Naylor.
- Race and Colour as a Major Constraint in Gloria Naylor can be the topic of study.

Limitations of the Present Study:

- The study is limited to the two writers namely Gloria Naylor and Manju Kapur.
- The study is limited to female writers one Afro-American and the other Indian.
- The research methodology is only descriptive.
- The study is likely to be biased as the researcher herself is a female.

5. ***Collaboration (if any):*** *No*

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